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ABSTRACT

Kearney State College Library in Nebraska implemented a management by objectives model in 1973. Following compilation of a statement of library aims in 1974, each department developed more specific objectives for the department that would support the aims statement. Within each plan was a role statement for the department, written objectives, and a list of activities to measure how well objectives were performed. Each year through 1976-77 the planning statements were reviewed and revised. Job descriptions were updated by each librarian and discussed by librarian, department director, and library director. Each librarian formulated a work development plan of the individual's goals and objectives for the year. The success of this management by objectives system will be measured in the future. In addition to a chart depicting the planning steps, the library aims statement is appended. (KP)

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MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES IN THE MEDIUM-SIZED ACADEMIC LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

Library literature abounds in management theory, yet very little has been written on the application of the theoretical models in an actual library setting.

This article discusses the implementation of the Management By Objectives model as developed at Kearney State College. It traces the development from 1973 through 1977, relating the successes and failures that were experienced during the five years.

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MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES IN THE MEDIUM-SIZED ACADEMIC LIBRARY

At the 1976 ALA Pre-Conference on Library Buildings and Architecture, Mr. Raymond Holt[1] emphasized that "some libraries plan; others are planned upon." Mr. Holt's statement on the importance of planning ahead gave cause for reflection to 1974 when the Kearney State College Library embarked on a management system commonly known in business as Management By Objectives. It was an effort to develop a planning strategy that would theoretically lead to better management of learning resources and services.

In 1973 the library began to formalize a management system through the development of a one-page Library Aims Statement(Appendix A). It was divided into three sections concentrating on improvement of library services, analysis of library operations, and development of staff. One could have interpreted the Library Aims Statement as the library mission. Unfortunately, lacking no specific steps for further development of the statement, it was primarily an impressionistic document encouraging staff to place priorities on the three statements or over-all goals.

In 1974, using the Library Aims Statement as a beginning for future planning, the library staff developed more specific objectives within each department that would support the Library Aims Statement. Each department(Reference, Documents, Serials, Cataloging, etc.) was asked to do the following:

1. Develop a role statement for the department(role on campus, role within library organization).
2. Develop specific objectives to accomplish in 1974-75(new and continuing).
3. Develop specific activities under objectives(the method of accomplishing the objectives).
4. Evaluate accomplishment of objectives through visits with the Director of Libraries on a regular basis during the year.

The planning document of objectives from each librarian was called the

[1]Raymond Holt, Library Consultant, Del Mar California, Chairperson of ALA Pre-Conference on Library Building Space Needs, 1976.

Work Development Plan(WDP), and by June 1974 each librarian had formulated and developed a written plan for his/her department supporting the Library Aims Statement, the parameters were not particularly difficult to follow because of the broad scope of the Library Aims Statement. Within each Work Development Plan there was a role statement for the department, written objectives, and activities that would measure how well objectives were performed. These department objectives were completed on or before target dates during 1974-75 year, with two appraisal visits with the Director of Libraries to discuss and evaluate each librarian's progress. Later, merit raises were given for significant contribution to the accomplishment of the Library Aims Statement. The evaluation system used was the "critical incident" approach in which the Director of Libraries documented what he felt were highly contributing accomplishments by the librarian.

During the 1974-75 year, however, the library staff reviewed the 1974-75 method of planning for that year, and noted a number of problems. Perhaps the most apparent weakness in the 1974-75 library planning process was lack of a more decisive statement of library mission, supported by overall library goals, and strengthened by overall library objectives. A document was needed that enunciated more clearly and explicitly the library's mission, its general goals, and its objectives. Plans were made to improve the process for 1975-76.

The first step was to formulate and develop a strong statement of library mission. Relying on copies of several other library mission statements as resource material, the library staff was able to develop a library mission statement supportive of the mission statement of the college.

Next, it was important that the library's needs be addressed by first determining major problem areas in the library organization. After each librarian was asked to identify such weaknesses, similar kinds of problems were combined under more general headings.

At each juncture in the development of the 1975-76 library planning document the Director of Libraries presented the material to the library staff, ahead of scheduled meetings. All changes were adopted by a majority vote. There was involvement by librarians in the planning process, both through meetings and through memos asking for input. After considerable discussion the library staff was able to identify five major areas that needed improvement. Those problems were translated into general goal statements. For example, several departments were concerned about the lack of statistics that would aid in library decision-making. This problem statement was translated into a goal statement which read "the library will develop and implement a Management Information System to gather statistics to aid in decision-making." Goals by definition were general statements not able to be measured, so it was necessary then to formulate and develop measurable objectives to support the goals. One such objective under the statistics goal above was "The Library will employ a systems analyst to set up guidelines for a Management Information System." Each objective was given a target date for completion, as determined by the library staff, and different members of the library staff accepted responsibility for the completion of the 25 objectives that were eventually developed. For example, a librarian contacted a systems analyst to arrange for a meeting to discuss a management information statistics gathering system for the library.

Finally, after more discussion and meetings the library staff had developed a planning document for the KSC Library entitled the KSC Library Statement of Mission, Goals, and Objectives. By any measure of the past document it was a progressive step in assessing library needs and translating them into workable objectives. The M.G.O, as it was abbreviated, also aided individual librarians as they developed their own Work Development Plans, both in support of the M.G.O Statement and in support of specific objectives they wished to accomplish within their departments.

The system of evaluation used in 1974-75 was utilized again for 1975-76, applying a written evaluation instrument whereby accomplishment of objectives was noted and merit accorded.

As the 1976-77 year approached, the 1975-76 M,G,O Statement was evaluated, beginning with a review of the two-page Mission Statement. Again, as in the previous years, problems were addressed and then translated into goals and objectives. One difference in the method of developing the 1976-77 M,G,O Statement was the degree of staff involvement. The entire formulation and development of the 1976-77 Statement was determined at meetings for those librarians who were interested in attending. They were designated as open meetings in which a great deal of time and effort was expended.

The 1976-77 M,G,O Statement was thus comprised of a slightly revised Mission Statement, six library goals formulated from the list of problems, and 26 Library objectives supporting the goals; objectives that required the involvement of more than one department in the library organization.

An element as important as library planning is the evaluation to measure whether or not and how well the objectives were accomplished. The evaluation technique used for 1976-77 held promise. In the 1974-75 and 1975-76 library planning documents, each job description was updated with input from each librarian concerned. For 1976-77 each job description was examined by the Director of Libraries, the Division Director(User Services, Technical Services, Learning Materials Center), and changes were proposed and given to the departmental librarian for his/her consideration. Then by appointment, the librarian, the Director of Libraries, and the Division Director discussed each principal responsibility in the job description, finally arriving at a "contract" whereby the librarian agreed to perform the principal responsibilities as listed. This procedure proved useful when each librarian began to formulate and develop his/her Work Development Plan, the individual's goals and objectives for the year. Each

principal responsibility from the job description was written in the WDP with specific objectives under each one and target dates for completion. Thus a librarian's WDP contained specific objectives to be accomplished within the departmental area in addition to the librarian's responsibility to direct or assist in the accomplishment of the over-all library objectives as stated in the M.G.O Statement.

The chart below illustrates the step-by-step process used for planning the 1976-77 library year.

Annual Evaluation of Mission Statement.

Formulation and Development of Library Goals and Library objectives, based on a listing of problem areas.

Final Adoption by librarians of KSC Library Statement of Mission, Goals, and Objectives for next year.

Evaluation of each librarian's job description from the year before for needed changes. Agreement by Director of Libraries, Division Director and librarian to complete principal responsibilities as agreed upon in job description.

Librarian's formulation of Work Development Plan developed around principal responsibilities from job description plus responsibilities for M,G,O Statement of more over-all library objectives involving more than one department.

Discussion of rough draft of WDP by librarians submitted to Director of Libraries and Division Director.

Final adoption of WDP for next year, with target dates.

Visitation with librarians in October and February to evaluate progress of WDP, make any adjustments as necessary.

WDP accomplishments assessed by Director of Libraries and Division Directors for a system of reward using an evaluation instrument.

What began in 1974-75 as an experimental project in management has developed in three years to a much more time-consuming effort in planning the library year. The literature on MBO cautions that too much time can be spent in planning to the detriment of basic library services. Let there be less worry about too much time spent in planning, and more concern about a library organization that does not plan nearly enough. A speaker at the Miami University Management Workshop in 1973 believed that each librarian who added one percent of his/her time to planning would make a significant difference in the progress of the library. Libraries need not worry for some time that too much energy is spent on planning.

The experience at the KSC Library has been a unique and unusual attempt to improve management throught a formalized system of personnel involvement, and will continue to change and develop. It will be interesting in five years to measure the success. Planning cannot occur through serendipity, or libraries will be planned upon.

KEARNEY STATE COLLEGE

LIBRARY AIMS

The aims of the library are to serve as the foundations for library action. The library's achievement of these aims is to be measured by comparison with similar institutions and accepted standards.

Library Service

The library is an educational resource center directly involved in the programs of Kearney State College. The library will provide services at the highest level and inform the academic community of their availability. Services will be promoted on an energetic level and rendered with professional attitudes. Services are to be designed and performed to improve the quality and quantity of library utilization.

Analysis of Library Operations

Library operations are to be analyzed so that the evaluative and quantitative data necessary for decision making are available. Areas to be analyzed include costs, personnel performance, services, collections, users, and others considered necessary.

Staff Development

Staff development is to occur at all levels, but chief emphasis is to be placed on the professional level. The staff is to be knowledgeable about library operations so that they may support the general aims of the library through their innovative contributions. Steps will be taken to improve existing competencies and to establish additional needed skills. All staff are encouraged to further their own development through such means as schooling, professional reading, in-service training, participation in professional organizations, and other appropriate activities.